

MARCH HEALTH TIP

In recognition of National Nutrition Month®, this health tip will offer a few ideas for eating healthier.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that physical inactivity and poor nutrition contribute to obesity and many chronic diseases, such as cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes- all of which can dramatically reduce the quality of one's life.

MyPyramid is a model that translates the principles of the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* so that people can make healthier food and physical activity choices.

MyPyramid.gov offers several basic tips for achieving a healthier diet.

- Eat more whole grains
 - Choose whole grain products such as whole-wheat bread and pasta or brown rice.
 - Read the food label- color does not necessarily mean whole-grain.
 - Look for foods high in fiber.
- Vary your veges
 - This provides your body with a range of valuable nutrients.
 - Frozen and canned vegetables are just as desirable as fresh but look for “no salt” options and watch out for sauces which may add unhealthy fats.
- Focus on fruit
 - Again, go for a variety of different colored fruits.
 - Choose fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruit, with no sugar added.
 - Go easy on fruit juices- they are much lower in fiber than whole fruit.
- Get your calcium rich foods
 - Choose fat free or low fat milk, cheese and yogurt.
 - Other sources for calcium include calcium fortified soymilk and cereals, broccoli and spinach.
- Go lean with protein
 - Leaner options include fish, beans, skinless chicken and turkey cutlets.
 - Trim off fat before cooking or drain off fat after cooking.
 - Choose to broil, grill or roast meats instead of frying.

With all foods, pay attention to the amount of sugar in a product and avoid foods which contain partially hydrogenated vegetable oil (a source of trans fat) or saturated fat.

Please visit the Health Department's Health Information & Resources page for resources to help you implement these changes. www.co.frederick.md.us/HealthDept/information

References:

“5 a day for better health.” From www.5aday.gov/index.html.

“Dietary supplement fact sheet: Calcium.” Office of Dietary Supplements, NIH. From <http://dietary-supplements.info.nih.gov/factsheets/calcium.asp>.

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“Physical activity and good nutrition: Essential elements to prevent chronic diseases and obesity.” CDC, 2006. From www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/publications/aag/dnpa.htm.

“Tips and Resources.” USDA. From www.mypyramid.gov/tips_resources/index.html.